

## THE LAND OF "PRETTY SOON."

I know of a land where the streets are paved  
With the things that we want to achieve.  
It is waited with the money we meant to have  
Saved.  
And the pleasures for which we strive.  
The kind words unspoken, the promises  
Broken.  
And many a coveted boon  
Are stowed away there in that land some-  
where—  
The land of "Pretty Soon."

There are uncut jewels of possible fame  
Lying about in the dust.  
And many a noble and lofty aim  
Covered with mould and rust.  
And oh, this place while it seems so near,  
Is farther away than the moon.  
Thou hast purpose befall yet we never get  
There—  
To the land of "Pretty Soon."

The road that leads to that mystic land  
Is strewn with pitiful wrecks.  
And the ships that have sailed for its shining  
strand  
Bear skeletons on their decks.  
It is farther at noon than it was at dawn.  
And farther at night than at noon.  
Oh, let us beware of that land down there—  
The land of "Pretty Soon."

## MY JO, JOHN.

BY HELEN B. MATHERS.

### CHAPTER I.

"Why not separate?" said Mrs. Anderson, as easily as she might have said, "Will you have another egg?"

Colonel Anderson jumped up from the breakfast table as if a gadfly had stung him.

"Did you say separate?" he said calmly, though his features worked with emotion.

"Yes," said Mrs. Anderson, looking perfectly amiable, "but while we are about it, why not divorce?"

"Why, indeed?" he said, with a forlorn courage. "But unfortunately the law does not grant a divorce for incompatibility of temper, and I'm not aware that I've taken to beating you—yet."

"Why don't you?" said Mrs. Anderson, coming insultingly close to him, and lifting a dimpled chin and rounded cheek in invitation to a slap. "You needn't hit hard—and then I can divorce you."

Colonel Anderson looked at his wife swiftly, his cheek coloring with shame, as she stood there with hands loosely clasped behind her smart breakfast-gown, and heart beating wildly in her shoes.

"So you are afraid," she said very low, "yet men find courage to do worse things every day of their lives, than box their wives' ears!"

He turned abruptly away from her to the window, through which the air blew fresh and sweet, as it can do even in Harley street, bringing with it the scent of the flowers that filled the boxes, and from where he stood he could see the delicate green of the trees in Cavendish square, and he especially noted their beauty, as he said to himself:

"Has she heard? Can she know already?"

His silence made her desperate. She sharpened her tongue—Oh! little rosy cause of much evil—like a sword, and does not a woman's tongue always wage the fiercer, and cut the deeper, when it is met with a serene and passive resistance? And a woman always forgets all the bitter things she has said, and is astonished to find that a man does not forget them too.

"After all," she said, in a voice that trembled suspiciously, "I don't know that I should care about a divorce! Of course I should marry again—and I'm so afraid of making a second mistake!"

John Anderson straightened himself up suddenly, but made no answer, because probably in great crises a man's sense of humor is usually in abeyance, while a woman's remains in full force.

Of why did he not laugh, turn round and box her ears, or kiss her? A terrible feeling that he was slipping away from her, from her voice, her influence, her very life, came over the poor woman, much as if she were a shipwrecked mariner who sees a ship recede from the shore on which he stands.

"There must be some reason for this," he said at last, and she knew by his voice that he was angry, with the unappeasable wrath of the sweet-tempered man when he is really roused. "I suppose—you know?"

"Yes, I know," she said drearily, looking at his back, "and I think that for both our sakes we had better separate!"

"So be it," he said, and his voice, with a curious note of relief in it, sank into her heart like a knell. "I will see my solicitors this morning, and the sooner the deed is drawn up the better."

"Haden't they better draw up one of attachment at the same time—yourself to Lady Blanche?" said Mrs. Anderson, with poignant sharpness.

"Be kind enough to leave Lady Blanche's name out of this discussion," said Colonel Anderson, sternly. "What! are you becoming a slanderous woman as well as one whom no man could dwell with on terms of peace?"

"How loud you talk!" she cried impatiently and irrelevantly. "We have lived together for twenty years, and yet you have not got the right pitch of my ears yet!"

"And you have lived with me twenty years without understanding me in the least at the end of them," he cried gravely.

Mrs. Anderson blanched for a moment, and glanced at the tall, usually sleek figure, now knit-up and made erect by manly indignation, at the usually gentle face, now hardened by wounded pride and disappointment, and her heart fluttered, while her temper remained obdurate as ever.

"Lady Blanche's husband is evidently not covetous of the peaceful charms of her company," she said, untwining and tying a ribbon to hide the trembling of her hands. "I wonder why other people's husbands are so much more entertaining than

one's own? Perhaps, now we are to be separated, I shall have an opportunity—of finding out!"

Colonel Anderson turned swiftly and looked full in the face of the woman who had been his happy wife for so long, and whom he had only lately discovered to be—not perfection.

"No, Mary," he said, "you will not. Tom will see to that. I would rather put up with all our late bickerings, and your nagging and insulting suspicions, than—"

"Don't alarm yourself!" she interrupted him, with a passion entirely past his comprehension. "I'm much too proud to put myself on a level with you! All men may do as they like and all women may be good. There you have the laws that rule the sexes, in a nutshell! And I despise your sex too heartily ever to give one of them a chance of making game of me!"

"If you think so badly of us all, and of me in particular," he said, with dignity, "I could not ask or expect you to put up with my company any longer." I spoke in anger when I first agreed to a separation, but now, in sorrow, and deliberately, I reiterate my consent. Where there is no trust there can be no happiness, and when quarrels come to be such a matter of every day and hourly occurrence, as they have become lately, it is far better that such cat and dog companionship should cease. A man likes a smile and a pleasant word when he comes home—"

"Toujours perdrix!" said Mrs. Anderson, looking fierce and dangerous. "What do you want with smiles at home when you can get so many abroad?"

"I get courtesy, ma'am, which I don't get here, and a welcome—"

"For which you pay," said Mrs. Anderson, suddenly grown very pale, the little bit of core of knowledge in her heart making it for the moment almost inhuman.

He remained perfectly silent and still, and again his silence maddened her.

"What an absurd name it is for you, John Anderson!" she said, in her clear, soft tones, while her knees trembled beneath her, "faithful, noble, good John Anderson!"

"And I'll be shot if your name ought to be Mary," said her husband. "Mary! what a name for a nagging, grumbling, evil speaking—"

"I am not Lady Blanche, I know," she cried out suddenly, "but I can't help that. Only I can relieve you of my presence here. Fortunately we have two houses—this and Pigeonwick, and I imagine you will give me my choice between them."

"Certainly," he said, in a voice that sounded curiously flat after his lately raised tones, and he resumed his gaze out of the window.

"And I choose Pigeonwick," she said. "I always liked the country, especially at this time of the year." (Did the poor woman think how it would not be always "this time of year?") "I can take Martha and Fletcher can remain with you."

"Certainly," he said again quietly. How easily he fell in with her plans? Yet she had proposed them in angry jest and he had leaped at the idea, and instantly turned it into deadly earnest.

"You will of course," he said, and if he had turned his head she must have seen the color in his face. "Have your own income. I suppose that will be sufficient to keep the place up?"

Mrs. Anderson drew in her breath sharply, and stood looking at her husband's back with astonished eyes, as at some unfamiliar sight.

"Does she mean to ruin him, too, like the other ones?" she said to herself after some moments of bewilderment. "Oh! this is too much! One would think his sense of shame would hold him back! But let him keep his money—it won't last long, with her patted de mouches in it. Oh! what a shame, what a shame!"

"I have no doubt it will be quite sufficient," she said, icily. "Perhaps you would like me to pay Tom's college expenses out of it too?"

Colonel Anderson drew a deep breath, and she saw him brace his shoulders suddenly, as he answered in a low voice:

"If you could manage it—yes."

Mary stood quite still, scarcely believing her ears. There had never been any talk of money between these two, all the years of their married life. What had been hers was his, and his hers; and he had written the checks, and she had spent as she pleased.

She drew up her head haughtily—and Mary could look very naughty when she pleased—and made a gesture, as if she shook herself absolutely free from him.

"I have no doubt that I could manage it," she said, in a voice so astonishingly unlike her own that he turned round to see if she was still there; and then she saw the shame, the hang-dog look in his face, and a boundless scorn for him filled her generous soul.

"I can put down the carriage," she said, quietly; "and Tom must curtail his 'winces' at Oxford—and I have no doubt we shall be able to manage very well, indeed."

He made a movement as if to speak; then checked himself, drank up in one swift, comprehensive glance the expressive loathing of her face and attitude, then, with bent head, and looking absolutely crushed, passed out.

### CHAPTER II.

Colonel Anderson's feet took him without volition of his own across Cavendish square and up Oxford street, this not being the way he had intended to go at all when he set out.

That refuge of the destitute, to the

harried or married man, his club, had beckoned him with consoling arms as he left home, and some wild idea of a "peg" had even crossed his brain, early in the day though it was, and abstemious as his habits usually were.

But as I have said, he went almost unconsciously in the opposite direction, and stopped, from mere force of habit, before a house in Park street, that looked dull enough to be eminently respectable, the more especially as Lady Blanche did not at that moment happen to be adorning one of the windows, as she had a way of doing when she had a little spare time and required something more lively than a mirror to give back her charms.

For she was a woman omnivorous of admiration, who could appreciate the admiring glance of a navy as heartily as that of a prince, and having at all times a "quid concito o' herself," being in that respect the prototype of "the lady with the swolled head," whom some of us know, and whose petty, paltry eternal "I" sounds as unceasingly though not half so agreeably as the waves on the seashore.

Had her ladyship been visible, Colonel Anderson might have dared to knock for admision, but as it was, his courage failed him, and he pottered into the park, now smart and gay with its hyacinth beds of lilac, and white, and rose, gorgeously sweet and stiff, and liable to destruction in the night from a spiteful parting stab of King Frost.

The searching sun showed his face wan, and growing sharp as a pen, advertised his few gray hairs, and found out the wrinkles in his clothes, revealing him in short, as a weary gentleman who had gone bankrupt either in mind, body or estate, and which may be reckoned the worst of the three ills is probably the one from which a man happens at that precise moment to be suffering.

He had not lived for the world, unless, indeed, the four walls of his house meant the universe, and if Mary were satisfied, he could always say with Browning:

"God's in His heaven all's well with the world."

But now Mary had deserted him, and the pang of that desertion pressed the soldier hard as he faced the actual fact in all its naked ugliness and truth. Desertion—and by a comrade who had kept step with him, through rain and shine, for close on twenty years, through joy and sickness, and good times and bad, only to drop away from him when the worst time came of all, leaving him in the slough of a darksome path, while she stepped into the bright light of a smooth road, along which she might journey in ease and pleasure.

He knew that she had reason—yet he could not kneel to her for forgiveness, knowing the wrong he had done her, and that still a greater heart than hers might have forgiven, for deeper even than his gentleness was John Anderson's pride, and even further down than that was the slow obstinacy.

So that he never faltered in his intention of calling that day on the solicitors who were to arrange for the separation, and had indeed already selected the firm to whom he should go, by no means the firm that conducted his usual business.

Suddenly Tom came into his mind—Tom, who had nearly as much cause for anger as his mother, and who would naturally take his mother's side, whereas, if Tom had been a girl, thought John Anderson, wistfully, perhaps she would have stood up for her poor old dad, as daughters mostly do, and found some sort of excuse for him. It would be lonely at Harley street when Mary was gone, and he shivered as he walked in the spring sunshine, and found the young green overhead crude and harsh, and the blue of the sky exasperatingly monotonous and bright.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

### A Bug Six Inches Long.

The Hercules beetle (Dynastes Hercules) is one of the largest, if not really the largest, known species of the Cleftrota or beetle family. They are not found in the United States proper, but I understand that a fine specimen is occasionally picked up on the islands off the coast of Florida and in the West Indies. I have two dried specimens of Dynastes, one of which is 6½ inches in length measuring from the tip of his upper mandible or "horn" to the end of its body. The head of the "varmint" is jet black, and the upper mandible or pincher is notched and covered with stiff, golden-colored bristles. The under mandible is perhaps an inch shorter than the upper, and the two form a pair of nippers that would cause the stag beetle or common June bug to die with envy.

"Samby-Pamby," which has come to be applied to a person of vacillating character, as well as weak literary productions, was originated by the poet Pope. He applied it to some puerile verses that had been written by an obscure poet—one Ambrose Phillips—addressed to the children of a peer. The first half of the term is meant as a baby way of pronouncing Ambrose, a pet nickname for Ambrose, and the second half is simply a jingling word to fit it.

A Criminal's Smile.

"I can tell more about a man from his smile," said the chaplain of a prison, "than from his promises or his regrets. A crooked smile shows that there is something wrong behind it, just as a sarcastic or cynical smile shows a warp in the nature of the person who wears it. But, when the heart is right, the smile will be of the right kind."

## OUR LAUGHING GAS.

CLEVER BITS OF HUMOR AND SATIRE.

Some Ten Pictures of Life as Seen From the Funny Side—Celtic Philosophy Up to Date—McFadden's Desire—Flotsam and Jetsam.



That I may win your heart, dear!

She.  
You summer men! There now are ten Who swear they worship me, sir, Though I admire your youth and fire I fear it can not be, sir. My poor heart, it's in little bits, I've had a busy season; The gift you ask my soul would task Beyond the bounds of reason.

—O. T. F., in Truth

### The Ex-Czar at Poker.

About two years ago Congressman Reed learned the fascinating game of poker. He has become quite an adept at the game. He likes it. When not otherwise engaged he likes to take a hand every night in company with a few congenial spirits. They say he is a most excellent bluffer. It is well known that on demand of one-fifth of the members of the house a roll call must be ordered by the presiding officer. Whether a roll call is desired is generally ascertained by a show of hands. The general phrase used by the presiding officer is "Evidently a sufficient number, and the yeas and nays are ordered."

A few nights ago Reed was engaged in a game of poker. There was a very luscious jack pot, and Reed and another player were contending for it. They raised each other several times, and at last Reed "called" his opponent. "What have you?" said Reed. "Four kings," said his opponent. "Evidently a sufficient number," said the ex-speaker, and the other fellow rallied in the chips—Omaha Bee.

### Not So Very Drunk.

"Gus De Smith was pretty drunk on Sunday, wasn't he?" inquired Col. Plumbottle of Sils Pendergast. "Oh, no, not so very. Who said he was drunk? Gus was a little full, but I don't like to call him drunk." "But the boys all say he was paralyzed, and that he drove up to Birdie McElennepin's on a wood rack and wanted her to go riding with him. I should call that pretty drunk." "That! Oh, that's nothing for Gus. I saw him do worse than that once, and I didn't call him so very drunk." "What did you see him do worse than that?" "Why, I saw the boys give him 2 cents and a cuspidor and send him out after beer. Some folks might think Gus was drunk then, but I didn't think he was so very drunk."

### Getting at the Facts.

Attorney—You are the president of the Dazzling Sun Gas company, are you not?

Witness—I am.

"Now, sir, for the purpose of getting at the exact facts in this case I am compelled to ask you what it costs the company per thousand feet to manufacture gas."

"That, sir, is a matter of no concern to you and has nothing to do with this case."

"I insist upon knowing."

"I prefer not to answer, sir."

(To the Court)—"Your honor, it is absolutely necessary to get the figures."

The Court—The witness will answer the question.

"Now, then, I will ask you again, sir. How much does the manufacture of gas cost the company by the thousand feet?"

"I haven't any idea. I have nothing to do with the business affairs of the company, sir, except to draw my regular quarterly dividend of 5 percent."

—Exchange.

### Celtic Philosophy.



Brannigan—There's another wan o' them rich banker fellers as has just lost two million dollars in wan day. McManus—Begob, an' its better than if it happened to a poor workin' mon.—Truth.

### A Student's Smart Break.

Professor (to a student who had on the lecture hall a loud cravat instead of a white one)—These loud cravats are becoming very fashionable, it seems.

Student—Yes, Professor, that's so. Professor (severely)—But they are not worn in the presence of gentlemen.

Student (somewhat confused)—No, Professor, they never are—Sunday Mercury.

## A Friend in Need.

A colored man knocked at the door of the humble cabin of Jim Webster, an Austin African. Mrs. Webster appeared, and asked what all the fuss was about.

"Am Mr. Webster in?"

"No; what de debble does you want wid him?"

"I see a good deal of a friend ob his, and I wants ter borrow a dollar from him."

"Guess dar's some mistake dar. Nobody what wants ter borrow a dollar from my husband can be a good friend of his'n. Dar's a lie out somewhars. G'way, niggah!"

### The Widow's Sufferings.

A colored woman in a Texas town has just buried her fourth husband. As in duty bound Parson Whangdoodle Baxter called to console the widow.

"De Lor' will temper de wind to de shorn lamb."

"Does yer mean dat I see one ob de black sheep ob de flock?" asked the widow tartly.

"I doesn't mean dat, sister. All I means am dat yore affliction am sore. Nobody 'presitates de sufferin's ob de widow."

"Perticklerly when dark colors make her look like a skeerrow. I reckon I knows all about de sufferings ob de widdy. I has been dar foah times."

### Correct Diagnosis.

Doctor (feeling patient's pulse)—What is your husband's business?

Patient's Wife—He is a merchant.

Doctor—Has he been overworking himself of late?

Patient's Wife—Not that I am aware of.

Doctor (musingly)—Singular.

Patient's Wife—He bought an amateur photographer's outfit last week and he has been busy ever since trying to make a picture.

Doctor—If I'm! Brain fever.

### Definition of Pretext.

A few evenings ago a little boy was busily engaged at his lessons. His father, one of the leading citizens of Dallas, had gone to the lodge, and his mother was busy sewing. The little boy looked up and asked:

"Mamma, what does the word 'pretext' mean?"

"When your father says he has to go to the lodge two or three times a week, that is a pretext to get away from his family."

The boy did not say anything, but the next day when he read out to a whole school his definition of pretext, he created a sensation.—Siftings

### Unwonted Curiosity.

McFadden—If Ol should iver die suddenly, Ol hope they'll hold wan av thim autopsies over my body.

Brannigan—And why?

McFadden—So that Ol kin know the cause av me death, you chump.—Truth.

### An Egoistic Proposition.

"John, where is my mother-in-law going for her drive to-day?"

Coachman—I don't know, sir.

"Then drive her to the depot and buy her a ticket to—well, Chicago."—Truth.

### An Important Point.

Judge Noonan of San Antonio put the usual questions to a man who had been found guilty of murder.

"Do you know any reason why sentence should not be pronounced upon you according to law?"

The doomed man reflected for a few moments and then said:

"Yes, judge, I know of a very good reason. My lawyer didn't have anything to say about the most mitigating circumstances in my case."

"To what mitigating circumstances do you refer?" asked the judge.

"You see, he didn't tell the jury that the mercury on the day I shot that man was 106 in the shade."

"And what is there mitigating about that?"

"You know very well, judge, that when a murder is committed in the heat of the moment it is only manslaughter, and when I shot that man it was in the hottest part of the day, so you see it couldn't have been a cold, deliberate murder."

Judge Noonan then passed sentence on the man, but his attorney is going to have the case reversed by the Court of Appeals.—Siftings

### His Antiquity Established.

Census Taker—How old is your father?

Citizen—Just passed his hundredth birthday.

"Impossible!"

"Quite true."

"Can you prove it?"

"Yes. He sent some poetry to the magazines and lived to see it published."

"And he's only 100 years old? Well, well."

### Musical Note.

A Dallas man who was out fishing near Dallas took dinner at the house of a granger. While at dinner the city man remarked:

"Isn't this rather early to be killing pigs?"

"Of course it's too early to be killing hogs. Who is killing hogs such warm weather as this?"

"Why, I've heard pigs squealing ever since we sat down to dinner."

"Pigs squealing? Why, that's my oldest daughter practicing her singing lesson."

## PIERCE'S CURE

OR MONEY RETURNED.

For all chronic, or lingering, Pulmonary or Chest Diseases, as Bronchitis, Laryngitis, Severe Coughs, Spitting of Blood, Pains in Chest and Sides, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is a sovereign remedy.

In Asthma it is specific.

To build up both flesh and strength, when reduced below the standard of health by pneumonia, or "lung fever," grip, or exhausting fevers, it is the best restorative tonic known.

E. B. NORMAN, Esq. of Anson, Ga., says: "I think the 'Golden Medical Discovery' is the best medicine for pain in the chest that I have ever known. I am sound and well, and I owe it all to the 'Discovery'."

THE PLAN OF SELLING MEDICINES ON TRIAL TO

California claims 72,500 Chinese.

"Hansen's Magic Corn Salve." Warranted to cure or money refunded. Ask your druggist for it. Price 15 cents.

West Virginia has more coal than England.

Karl's Clover Root Tea. The great blood purifier, gives freshness and clearness to the complexion and cures constipation. 25c, 50c, \$1.

United States contains 34,800 locomotives.

Hegeman's Camphor Ice with Glycerine. The original and only genuine. Cures Chapped Hands and Feet, Cold Sores, etc. C. G. Hegeman, N.Y.

United States in 1896 worth \$12,500,000,000.

If the Baby is Cutting Teeth. Be sure and use that old and well-tried remedy, Mrs. WALKER'S SOOTHING SYRUP for Children Teething.

Woolen manufacture employs 230,000 Americans.